

Early Sikh Literature

Contents

ADI SAKHIAN	5
APOCRYPHAL COMPOSITIONS	8
BALA JANAM SAKHI	11
BEDAVA	17
BHATTVAHIS	19
CHATURBHUJ POTHİ	21
CHATURBHUJ, SODHI	22
HAZARNAMAH	22
HUKAMNAMA	23
HAQIQAT RAH MUQAM RAJE SHIVNABH KI	27
JANAM SAKHI	29
KABITTSAVAIYYE	32
KARNI NAMAH	33
MIHARBAN JANAM SAKHI	35
NASIHAT NAMAH	37
POTHİ	38
POTHİ SACH KHAND	39
POTHIAN, BABA MOHAN VALIAN	42
PREM AMBODH POTHİ	46
PREM SUMARAG	47
PURATAN JANAM SAKHI	51
Panj Sau Sakhi	57

SUKHMAM SAHANSARNAMA (PARAMARAIH)59

VARAN BHAI GURDAS61

ADI SAKHIAN

(adi = first; sakhian, plural of sakhi = anecdotes, stories, discourses, parables) is one of the early compilations but not the first of the extant janam sakhi traditions to evolve. The manuscript, dated 1758 Bk/ AD 1701, and copied by Shambhu Nath Brahman was first located by Dr Mohan Singh Diwana. While teaching at Panjab University, Lahore, prior to the partition of India in 1947, Mohan Singh Diwana discovered in the University's library a janam sakhi manuscript which differed from other extant Janam sakhis and bore an earlier date. Dr Diwana believed it to be a version of the earliest of all janam sakhi traditions and bestowed on it the name Adi Sakhian.

Since then four more copies of the manuscript have been located on the Indian side of the border by Professor Piar Singh who published in 1969 a text based on the manuscript held in the library of Motibagh Palace, Patiala, and supplemented by the manuscript in the Sikh Reference Library, Amritsar. This text was issued under the title Shambhu Nath Vali Janam Patri Babe Nanak Ji Ki Prasidh Nan Adi Sakhian. The fact that the two earliest of the dated manuscripts were both completed in AD 1701 obviously implies that it is a work of the seventeenth century. It is, however, most unlikely that the tradition in its extant form would have evolved earlier than the mid seventeenth century.

This conclusion is indicated by such marks of maturity as a multiplicity of sources and a coherent ordering of its various anecdotes. Two principal sources were evidently used by the first compiler of the Adi Sakhian. One of these provides a link with the Puratan

tradition, particularly with the manuscript available in the Languages Department, Patiala. The other appears to have been a manuscript, no longer extant, which was later to be used by the compiler of the B40 Janamsakhi. Four anecdotes have also been taken from the Miharban source (sakhis 26, 27, 28a and 28b), thus introducing the gosti form into the janam sakhi.

Essentially, however, the Adi Sakhian is a collection of narrative sakhis and it seems clear that its first recension was exclusively narrative in content. The gosts (discourses) borrowed from the Miharban tradition appear to be a later supplement to an original compilation. Although the Adi Sakhian shares an important source with the Puratan tradition it lacks the characteristic Puratan division of Guru Nanak's travels into four separate journeys known as four Udasis.

Almost all the travel anecdotes utilized by the Adi Sakhian compiler are drawn from his second major source, i.e. the manuscript shared with the B40 compiler, and most of them are presented as a single journey (sakhis 816). The only exception to this pattern is the story of Guru Nanak's visit to Raja Sivanabh (sakhi 21B). This also derives from his second source, but appears in the Adi Sakhian chronology as an isolated journey, solely concerned with Raja Sivanabh. In addition to these two journeys beyond the Punjab, the manuscript also incorporates sakhis describing Guru Nanak's visit to Pak Pattan, Saidpur, and Achal (sakhis 17, 18, 19 and 23).

Towards its conclusion (sakhis 2930) an element of confusion becomes evident and the identity of the sources used for this portion is unclear. The compiler's usual care is relaxed, possibly because of a hasty concern to

terminate the work or perhaps because the concluding portion is the work of a later, less competent contributor. The result is a somewhat garbled account of the death of Guru Nanak. It is, however, an interesting account in that it draws heavily on the Miharban tradition which was also used in the later stages of the BalaJanam Sakhi development.

References :

1. Kirpal Singh, Janam Sakhi Prampara. Patiala, 1969
2. Piar Singh, ed., Shambhu Nath ValiJanam Pat" Babe Nanak Ji Ki Prasidh Nan Adi Sakhian. Patiala, 1969
3. McLeod,W.H.,Early SikhTradition. Oxford, 1980

APOCRYPHAL COMPOSITIONS,

known in Sikh vocabulary as kachchi bani (unripe, rejected texts) or vadhu bani (superfluous texts) are those writings, mostly in verse but prose not excluded, which have been attributed to the Gurus, but which were not incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahib at the time of its compilation in 1603-04. Since the Sikh Scripture was compiled by one of the Gurus and the text as approved by him has come down to us intact, compositions not included therein must be reckoned as extratextual and spurious. Moreover, the contents of the Guru Granth Sahib have been so arranged and numbered as to leave absolutely no scope for any extraction or interpolation.

Still there are compositions which some attribute to the Gurus. Most of them are attributed to Guru Nanak, at least one sabda to Guru Tegh Bahadur, and some to Guru Gobind Singh. "Nanak" was the nom de plume the Gurus used for their compositions, and the custom was appropriated by some of the contemporary saints or religious poets. Some schismatists or those who had otherwise set themselves up as rivals to the growing faith adopted this pseudonym to benefit from its popularly accepted authority. Apocryphal writings attributed to Guru Nanak fall into three categories, viz.

(i) hymns addressed to the yogis on the subject of true yoga;

(ii) hymns addressed to the various Hindu sects on the ideal form of religion; and

(iii) compositions generally called namahs (epistles or addresses) addressed to Muslims, expounding the true meaning of shara` (Islamic laws) and the spirit of Islam.

Writings falling in categories (i) and (ii) seem to have been collected in course of time, in one volume popularly called Pran Sangli, the best known among Sikh Apocrypha on account of its spiritual insight, and closeness to Guru Nanak`s own diction and style.

Besides Pran Sangli, Kakar Vichar and Bihangam Ban! (guidance from birds about auspicious and inauspicious omens) are other apocryphal compositions attributed to Guru Nanak, but which go against his teachings and have thus never been owned by the Sikhs. Verses by Baba Miharban (q.v.) and his successors which they composed using the nom de plume `Nanak` under the title of Mahalla VI, VII and VIII are also apocryphal. Another category of the apocryphal literature comprises hymns written in Persianized Punjabi and addressed to the Muslim divines and kings.

These compositions are available in Chapters LXXVII to LXXVIII of the Pran Sangli also. Other compositions in this category are Nasihat Namah or Epistle of Admonitions; Hazar Namah or a discourse on the importance of being alert; Pak Namah or an address on pure living; and Kami Namah or an address on the importance of good conduct. The sabda attributed to Guru Tegh Bahadur reads: chit charan kamal ka asra chit charan kamal sangjoriai/mana lochai buriaian guru sabadiih mana horiai/banhjinah dipakariai sir dijai ban A na chhoriai/guru Tegh Bahadur bolia dhar paiai dharam na chhoriai.

Among the apocryphal writings attributed to Guru Gobind Singh are Sarbloh Granth and Prem Sumarag. Since Sikh Scripture was compiled by Guru Arjan himself and its first copy was inscribed under his personal supervision and care and its contents were meticulously authenticated, arranged and numbered, the genuineness of the text is beyond question. As such, the apocryphal texts pose no serious problem. Compositions which do not form part of the acknowledged recension are therefore not genuine.

It is only some portions of the Dasam Granth, the Book of the Tenth Master, which have been engaging the attention of scholars with regard to their authorship, but this work does not have scriptural status. As for Scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, the original volume prepared by Guru Arjan, is still extant, preserved in a descendant family at Kartarpur, in Jalandhar district of the Punjab. T.S.

BALA JANAM SAKHI.

The Janam Sakhis of the Bala tradition owe both their name and their reputation to Bhai Bala, a SandhuJa^ from Guru Nanak`s village of Talvandi. According to the tradition`s own claims, Bala was a near contemporary of Guru Nanak who accompanied him during his period in Sultanpur and during the course of his extensive travels. If these claims are correct and if in fact the eponymous tradition records the authentic narrative of such a man, it must follow that the Bala Janam Sakhis provide an essentially trustworthy account of the early life of Guru Nanak.

For more than a hundred years, from the late eighteenth until the early twentieth century, this claim was scarcely challenged. During the course of the present century it has been vigorously assaulted, without being wholly demolished. To this day popular portraits of the Guru, flanked by Mardana the minstrel and Bala the attendant, testify to a continuing acceptance of its claims. The tradition`s claims to eyewitness authenticity are set forth at the beginning of all Bala Janam Sakhis.

The earliest extant version opens as follows: In the year Sammat fifteen hundred and eighty-two, S.I 582 [AD 1525] on the fifth day of the bright half of the month of Vaisakh, Paira Mokha, a Khatri of Sultanpur, wrote this book. Guru Angad commanded that it be written. Paira recorded the dictation of Bala, a Sandhu latt who had come from Talvandi, the village of Rai Bhoi. He had come in search of Guru Angad. The recording of his narrative took two months and seventeen days to complete.

All the facts and all the places visited by Guru Nanak ji were faithfully and fluently described by Bhai Bala, with the result that Guru Angad was greatly pleased with him. Bhai Bala and Mardana, the Bard, accompanied Baba Nanak on his travels and Bhai Bala was with him during the period he spent at the commissariat (of Daulat Khan in Sultanpur). The text then relates the circumstances which brought Bala to Guru Nanak's successor, Guru Angad, who was at that time residing in the village of Khadur.

Guru Angad who previously knew nothing of Bala, was one day reflecting on the fact that he did not know the date of Guru Nanak's birth. Bala, having only recently discovered the identity and abode of Guru Nanak's successor, conveniently arrived in Khadur and agreed to bring the first Guru's horoscope from Talvandi. When he returned after locating the vital document, Paira Mokha was deputed to transcribe it. The process of transcription immediately becomes one of dictation as the horoscope, having served its purpose, is forgotten and the writer takes up Bala's narrative.

There then follows the lengthy collection of anecdotes which constitutes the earliest version of the Bala Janam Sakhi tradition. Two conflicting theories have been advanced to explain the origin of the earliest of the extant Bala Janam Sakhis. Neither accepts outright the text's own claim to represent an authentic narrative of the early life and travels of Guru Nanak. Such an interpretation is rendered insupportable by the inconsistencies and fantasies which it provides in abundance.

The first theory does, however, affirm a modified version of the Bala claim. Within the earliest text there are to be found references which are plainly traceable to the seventeenth century Hindali sect. These seek to denigrate Guru Nanak at the expense of Baba Hindal, father of the sect's founder. Early in the nineteenth century, Bhai Santokh Singh suggested that these references were to be explained on the grounds that the original Janam Sakhi authentically dictated by Bhai Bala had been mischievously corrupted by Hindali interpolations.

A version of this theory is still current. The profuse legendary material is, it affirms, the product of interpolation. Behind it there lies an original and essentially reliable Janam Sakhi which may be restored by stripping away the extraneous content. This theory is difficult to sustain in that a mere pruning, however drastic, cannot reduce any of the Bala texts to a consistent narrative. The second theory takes account of Janam Sakhi as a typical seventeenth century product, a composite work incorporating the results of a lengthy period of oral growth and transmission.

Other extant Janam Sakhis demonstrate the same process. The Bala tradition differs in its wealth of fantasy and in its attempt to establish authenticity by the contrived introduction of an eyewitness narrator. Its actual composition may have been the work of the Hindalis; or a seventeenth century text may have been interpolated by them in the manner suggested by Santokh Singh. Hindal interest of some kind is plainly evident in all early manuscripts of the Bala tradition. This leaves unsolved the problem of Bala's identity.

It may be safely affirmed that no person of this name could have been the constant companion of Guru

Nanak as none of the other early traditions refer to him. This omission is particularly noteworthy in the case of Bhai Gurdas. It would, however, be going too far to deny his existence entirely. Bala Sandhu may well have been a real person. Although the second of the theories outlined above reduces the Bala tradition to the level of other early Janam Sakhis it does nothing to minimize the importance of the tradition in later Sikh history.

Bala primacy had been firmly established by the end of the eighteenth century and its hold upon nineteenth century affections is clearly demonstrated by the degree to which such writers as Santokh Singh, Sant Ren, and Bhai Bahilo rely on it. When the introduction of printing produced a spectacular expansion of recorded Janam Sakhi materials, the growth was almost wholly monopolized by the Bala tradition. Many of the most treasured of all Janam Sakhi anecdotes derive from Bala sources and, if today one asks for a Janam Sakhi in a bookshop, the volume which is produced will almost certainly be the twentieth century Bala version.

Amongst the numerous extant manuscripts of this tradition, two principal recensions are to be found. Whereas the earlier terminates the narrative prior to Guru Nanak's death, the latter has Guru Angad relate this episode for Bhai Bala's benefit. In order to do so, the latter compiler has borrowed a death narrative from the Miharban tradition. The oldest of the extant Ba7a manuscripts is the earliest of all Janam Sakhi manuscripts of whatever tradition. It bears the date 1715 Bk/AD 1658 and is in a private collection in Delhi. Panjabi Hatth likhtan di Suchi lists twenty-two Bala manuscripts in the Punjab.

Three are located in London and individual items are to be found in various other places. Four editions have appeared since the printing press was first used for Janam Sakhis in 1871. An edition lithographed by Hafiz Qutab Din of Lahore in 1871 generally follows the earlier of the manuscript versions. Thereafter, however, there is progressive and substantial augmenting of the text, culminating in the letterpress version which has been current for most of the twentieth century.

A critical analysis of the linguistic characteristics of Bala and Puratan Janam Sakhis reveals that the language of the latter is older than that of the Bala Janam Sakhi. Auxiliary verb which is conspicuous by its absence in the Guru Granth Sahib and has very low frequency in Puratan, appears in Bala on the pattern of modern Punjabi. Many of the case inflexions regularly used in the Puratan have disappeared in Bala. Case inflexions were a characteristic of the old language, which have been gradually giving way to the postpositions. Again in the use of nasalization, the language of Puratan is akin to that of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Many of the verbal and nominal forms which contain nasalized vowels in Bala (just as in modern Punjabi) are oral in the Guru Granth Sahib as well as in Puratan Janam Sakhi. The Puratan uses the older forms of the adverbs of time and place, whereas the Bala employs the modern forms of the same adverbs. In general idiom, too, the language of the Puratan Janam Sakhi is certainly older than the language of Bala Janam Sakhi.

References :

1. Mcleod, W.H. Early Sikh Tradition. Oxford. 1980
2. Kirpal Sirigh, Janam Sakhi Prampara. Patiala, 1969
3. Kohli, Surindar Sirigh, ed. Janamsakhi Bhai Bala. Chandigarh, 1975

BEDAVA,

lit. disclaimer (be=without + dava = claim). The term came to be used by Sikh chroniclers in reference to an episode relating to the last days of Guru Gobind Singh *s battle at Anandpur during the winter of 1705. As, in consequence of the protracted siege of Anandpur, hardships of the besieged Sikh garrison increased, a few of the Sikhs wavered in their resolution and asked the Guru`s permission to leave the Fort.

The Guru told them that they could go if they were prepared to disown him. A few of them, it is said, recorded a statement disowning him and left. This statement came to be termed as bedava. As Sikhs who had deserted Guru Gobind Singh reached their homes, their womenfolk charged them with pusillanimity, and chided them for betraying their Guru in the hour of need. They offered to go and take to arms if the men would not re-join the Guru. One of the ladies, Mai (mother) Bhago, of the village of Jhabal in fact donned a warrior`s dress and weapons and exhorted them to follow her if they had still any sense of honour left.

The men became remorseful. They were preparing to return to the Guru when news spread in the countryside of the evacuation of Anandpur. When they learnt that Guru Gobind Singh had himself survived the holocaust and was reorganizing the Khalsa somewhere in the Malva region, they, at once set out in search of him, Mai Bhago still with them. They caught up with the Guru just when he faced a strong force led by the Mughal faujdar of Sirhind, Wazir Khan, in hot pursuit of him.

They challenged the invading host at Khidrana, now Muktsar, but at that time a small pond, the only water reservoir in that vast desert. They fell fighting almost to a man, but forced the enemy to retreat. See MUKTSAR and CHALIMUKTE. As quiet prevailed over the battlefield at sunset. Guru Gobind Singh came down from the high ground from where he had been raining arrows on the enemy to find all the Sikhs lying dead except one, Mahan Singh, at his last gasp. The Guru sat beside him and placing his head on his lap, asked him for his last wish. Mahan Singh`s only desire was that the Guru should annul the bedava he and his companions had written at Anandpur. As if the Guru had anticipated the return of the truants, he had kept that deed of renouncement with him throughout those troublous days and months since leaving Anandpur. He now pulled out of his pocket the bedava and tore it up to the immense satisfaction of Bhai Mahan Singh, who then died in peace.

References :

1. Kuir Singh, Gurbilas Patshahi 10. Patiala, 1968
2. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Sn Gur Pratap Sura/ Granth. Amritsar, 1926-37
3. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, The Sikh Religion. Oxford, 1909

BHATTVAHIS,

scrolls or records maintained by Bhattas, hereditary bards and genealogists. According to Nesfield as quoted in W. Crooke, The Tribes and Castes of the North Western India, 1896, Bhattas are an "offshoot from those secularised Brahmans who frequented the courts of princes and the camps of warriors, recited their praises in public, and kept records of their genealogies." These bards constantly attended upon or visited their patron families reciting panegyrics to them and receiving customary rewards.

They also collected information about births, deaths and marriages in the families and recorded it in their scrolls. These scrolls containing information going back to several past centuries formed the valued part of the bards' hereditary possessions. A group of Bhattas was introduced to Guru Arjan, Nanak V, by Bhatt Bhikha who had himself become a Sikh in the time of Guru Amar Das. According to Bhai Gurdas, Varan, XI. 21, and Bhai Mani Singh, Sikhan di Bhagat Mala, he had once visited Guru Arjan with the sangat of Sultanpur Lodhi.

Some of the Bhattas who came into the Sikh fold composed hymns in honour of the Gurus which were entered in the Guru Granth Sahib by Guru Arjan. These Bhattas and their successors too maintained their vahis in which they recorded information concerning the Gurus, their families and some of the eminent Sikhs. These old vahis are still preserved in the descendant families, now scattered mostly in Haryana state. Their script is bhattakshari, a kind of family code like lande or mahajani.

During the late 1950`s, a researcher, Giani Garja Singh, obtained Gurmukhi transcripts of some of the entries pertaining to the Guru period, from Guru Hargobind (1595-1644) to Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) through Bhatt Man Singh of Karsindhu village, in Jind district. Some of these were published as footnotes to Shahid Bilas Bhai Mani Singh, edited by Giani Garja Singh and published by Punjabi Sahitya Akademi, Ludhiana, in 1961. The rest are still in manuscript form lying in the Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.

These extracts provide valuable information regarding dates, places and events of the period. As contemporary evidence, Bhatt Vahis have to be used with caution however, for they are not diaries of the eyewitnesses. It was customary for the Bhattas to visit their hereditary patrons usually twice a year at harvest time to sing their praises and receive rewards or customary donations as well as to collect information for record in their vahis. These records are, therefore, based on information gathered generally after the occurrence of events and, possibly, sometimes received at second hand.

This may not apply to entries regarding the Gurus which were recorded by Bhattas who generally remained in attendance. On the whole, these Bhatt Vahis are a mine of information of historical and sociological value

CHATURBHUJ POTHİ,

which forms the third part of what is known as the Miharban Janam Sakhi, is the work of Sodhi Chaturbhuj, the youngest of the three sons of Sodhi Miharban (1581-1639), son of Guru Arjan's elder brother, Prithi Chand (1558-1618). The only known MS. of the pothi (book) preserved in the Sikh Historical Research Department of Khalsa College, Amritsar, forms part of a single work divided into three parts, Sachkhand Pothi by Miharban, Pothi Hariji by Miharban's second son and successor, Hariji (d. 1696), and Chaturbhuj Pothi.

The last one has its name recorded in the colophon as Chatrabhoj Pothi, the author's name is recorded as Chatar Bhoj, a variation on Chaturbhuj (lit. with four arms as Visnu is usually shown in images). Chaturbhuj's pothi contains 74 gostis or discourses and was completed in 1651. It has the same language, style and format as do the other two pothis the first by his father and the second by his brother. Each discourse in the Pothi commences with a general statement of the situation in which Guru Nanak supposedly delivered it.

Someone poses a question or expresses a doubt pertaining to some religious doctrine or practice, and Guru Nanak proceeds to explain by quoting and expounding one of his hymns. The author, Chaturbhuj in this instance, rounds off the discourse with a sloka, usually a couplet, from Guru Nanak's banf or of his own composition. The Pothi is, as is the Miharban Janam Sakhi as a whole, essentially exegetical rather than biographical, although the opening setting in each gosti does contain references

to some specific location and to the person or persons addressed.

The primary concern, however, remains doctrinal nature of God, nam simran, meditation on the Name, importance of the true Guru, and so on. While Hariji chose for his exegesis the longer compositions of Guru Nanak such as Japu, Pat.tf, Sidh Gosti and Oankar, Chaturbhuj took up, besides chaupadas and astpadis (4stanza and 8stanza hymns, respectively), pauris from Vars in Majh and Malhar measures and slokas.

CHATURBHUJ, SODHI. See [CHATURBHUJ POTH](#)

HAZARNAMAH,

an apocryphal composition in verse attributed to Guru Nanak. The work is a discourse on the control of five lusts. It commends virtues of honesty, dutifulness, humility, truthfulness, justice, contentment and faithfulness.

HUKAMNAMA,

a compound of two Persian words hukam, meaning command or order, and namah, meaning letter, refers in the Sikh tradition to letters sent by the Gurus to their Sikhs or sangats in different parts of the country. Currently, the word applies to edicts issued from time to time from the five takhis or seats of high religious authority for the Sikhs the Akal Takht at Amritsar, Takht Sri Kesgarh at Anandpur Sahib (Punjab), Takht Harimandar Sahib at Patna (Bihar), Takht Sachkhand Sri Hazur Sahib at Nanded (Maharashtra) and Takht Damdama Sahib at Talvandi Sabo (in Bathinda district of the Punjab).

Letters addressed to Sikhs by historical personages such as Baba Gurditta, the elder son of Guru Hargobind, Mata Sundari and Mata Sahib Devi, widows of Guru Gobind Singh, and Banda Singh Bahadur are also included in this genre. Some of the letters of the later Gurus to sangats or prominent Sikhs have in recent years been traced and published in two collections, with most of the material common to both, the first entitled Hukamname, edited by Ganda Singh (Patiala, Punjabi University, 1967), and the second Nisan te Hukamname, edited by Shamsheer Singh Ashok (Amritsar, Sikh Itihas Research Board, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, 1967).

A separate anthology of Guru Tegh Bahadur's hukamnamas, in Devanagari transcription and with an English translation, was published by Punjabi University, Patiala, in 1976. All hukamnamas were originally written in Punjabi, in Gurmukhi characters. Those of Guru

Hargobind as also most of Guru Tegh Bahadur`s are believed to have been written in their own hand. It appears, however, that in the time of Guru Gobind Singh, the text was written by a scribe while the Guru put down on the top of the letter an authentication mark, an invocation or some direction.

There is a near uniformity in the format of the hukamnamas. The earlier ones bore no date; from AD 1691 onwards they were usually dated and also, at times, numbered. Later on, the practice of recording at the end of the text the number of lines in the body of the letters also came into vogue. The scribes began the text with the words, Sri Guru ji ki dgid hai (It is the order of the revered Guru, or the revered Guru desires), preceded by the formula Ik Onkar Guru Sati, later Ik Onkar Satiguru (Remember One God, the True Guru).

Banda Singh Bahadur (1670-1716), blessed by Guru Gobind Singh himself, introduced a seal in Persian script as authentication mark and recorded the initial formula to read as Ik Onkar Fateh Darsanu (God is One, Victory to (His) Presence), and the text began with Sache Sahib di dgid hai (by order of the True Master). Hukamnamds of Mata Sundari begin with the words Sri Mata ji dl dgid hai, and those of Mata Sahib Devi with Sn Akal Purakh ji kd Khalisa Sri Maid Sahib Devi Ji di dgid hai (Mata Sahib Devi`s order to the Khalsa of the Timeless One). Apart from their importance to the Sikhs as the sacred remembrances of the Gurus, the hukamnamas are invaluable historical documents.

Names of persons and places to which they are addressed provide clues to the composition, socially, of early Sikhism and its spread, geographically. One of the

earliest hukamnamas discovered is a missive addressed by Guru Hargobind (1595-1644) to sangats at Patna, Alamganj, Sherpur, Bina and Monghyr, in Bihar, and includes no fewer than 62 names of prominent Sikhs belonging to those communities. Hukamnamas of Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-75) and Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) are addressed to sangats as far apart as Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet in the east and Patan, present day Pakpattan, in Pakistan in the west.

In addition to blessings from the Gurus and acknowledgement of the devotees' gifts, these letters contain instructions for the followers to cultivate love and prayer as well as indications with regard to the offerings they might bring. The demands ranged from cash contribution in the form of gold or hundis (bills of exchange) to pet birds, garments, weapons, cannons and war elephants.

Sometimes these demands are written in abbreviated forms. The hukamnamas, which are dated help to fix the chronology of certain events. For instance, letters instructing Sikhs not to recognize masands, or to the collectors, but to bring their offerings directly to the Guru on the occasions of Baisakhi and Divali are all written during 1699 or later, confirming the abolition of the institution of masands simultaneously with the creation of the Khalsa on 30 March 1699.

The almost identical letters, both dated 1 Kartik 1764 Bk/2 October 1707, while informing the sangats at Dhaul and Khara of Guru Gobind Singh's meeting with the Emperor (Bahadur Shah), enjoined upon them to present themselves duly armed when the Guru arrived in Kahlur (Anandpur). This was not to be, for the Guru passed away

at Nanded, in the South, a year later, but the Guru's intention of returning to the Punjab is clearly established. The hukamnamas are important linguistically as well and provide crucial clues for tracing the development of the Gurmukhi script and Punjabi prose.

References :

1. Ashok, Shamsheer Singh, ed., Nisan te Hukamname. Amritsar, 1967
2. Ganda Singh, ed., Hukamname. Patala, 1967
3. Nripinder Singh, The Sikh Moral Tradition. Delhi, 1990

HAQIQAT RAH MUQAM RAJE SHIVNABH KI

Haqiqat Rah Muqam Raje Shivrabh Ki (account or description of way, i.e. journey to the abode of Raja Shivrabh) is an anonymous and undated short piece in Punjabi prose, found appended to some manuscript copies of the Guru Granth Sahib, particularly to copies of the Bhai Banno recension. The author of this account is supposed to be Bhai Paira, a learned Sikh who was deputed by Guru Arjan to go to Singhladip (Singhladip of the Janam Sakhis), present-day Sri Lanka, to fetch a copy of a manuscript called the Pran Sangli (Chain of the Vital Breath), an interpretation of Hatha Yoga, which was said to have been recited by Guru Nanak to the Raja of Sanghladip, Shivrabh.

The manuscript of the Pran Sangli was brought to Guru Arjan, who rejected it as an apocryphal writing. The piece is not a travelogue, nor does the author claim to have himself visited the place of Shivrabh. It purports to be a sort of guide to travel, by ship to Sangladip, from the mainland of the Indian subcontinent and to locate the place of the Raja in that land. It is a short piece of simple prose about 200 words in length.

The language is a mixture of a Sadh Bhakha and Punjabi. The author mentions some place-names with their distance from each other in some cases. Some of these names can be identified, while one or two places can only be conjectured. It is also mentioned that there existed a number of Sikh sangats in those days in South India and Sri Lanka.

References :

1. McLeod, W.H., Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, Oxford, 1968.
2. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth, Amritsar, 1927-33.

JANAM SAKHI

derives its name from the number attached to the manuscript in the catalogue of the India Office Library, London (MS. Panj B40). It consists of a unique collection of sakhis or anecdotes concerning the life of Guru Nanak, and, although it shares common sources with the Puratan and Adi Sakhian traditions, it constructs a different sakhi sequence and incorporates a substantial block of stories which are to be found in none of the other major traditions. This cluster of anecdotes was evidently drawn from the oral tradition of the compiler's own area and includes all the principal janam sakhi forms such as narrative anecdote, narrative discourse, didactic discourse, and lieterodox discourse.

Another feature of particular interest and value is the inclusion of fifty-seven illustrations. The manuscript is also distinguished by the unusually clear description which is provided of its origins. Two notes appended to the manuscript (folios 84b, 230b) relate that the Janam Sakhi, commissioned by a patron named Sangu Mall and written in the hand of Daya Ram Abrol and illustrated by Alam Chand, a mason, was completed on Bhadon sudf 3, 1790 Bk/ 31 August 1733. The manuscript is said to be a copy of some other now nonextant manuscript which might have originally been written subsequent to Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom (1675).

This assumption is based on the fact that the manuscript makes no reference to Guru Gobind Singh or to his founding the Khalsa (1699) and historically the latest event to be mentioned is Guru Tegh Bahadur's

martyrdom. The manuscript comprises 231 folios (with five folios numbering 1518 and 23 missing) and has two apocryphal works entitled Madine di Gosti and Makke di Gosti conjointly entered under the title Makke Madine di Gosti after the table of contents which follow the text. Since the entry on Gosti is in a different ink and three more sheets have been added to complete the text of this Gosti, it clearly is a later interpolation.

According to internal evidence, the manuscript may have been recorded in Gujranwala district or near about although there is no clear indication about its provenance. Nothing is known of the manuscript's history since its completion in AD 1733 till 1907, although there is evidence which possibly indicates that the manuscript or a copy of it, may have been used in preparing Bhai Santokh Singh's 5n Gur Nanak Prakash. In 1885, Professor Gurmukh Singh of Oriental College, Lahore, referred briefly and cryptically to a "Lahore Janam Sakhi" which had been recorded in 1790 Bk and in 1913 Karam Singh, historian, reported having once seen an illustrated Janam Sakhi bearing the same date "in the possession of a Muslim bookseller of Lahore."

Both reports evidently refer to the B40 Janam Sakhi which had meanwhile found its way to London. There it was purchased in 1907 for 10 pounds by the India Office Library from its owner, Hafiz `Abd urRahman. At first sight the B40 manuscript appears to follow the Puratan tradition because its first eight sakhis have been drawn from a source which presented its material in the characteristically Puratan style; the source appears, in fact, to have been the same manuscript as the HaHzabad Janam Sakhi compiler used when recording his Puratan collection.

From Sakhi 9 onwards, however, the B40 compiler chooses selectively from at least five different sources, four of them apparently in manuscript form and the fifth his local oral tradition. In addition to the manuscript which he shared with his Puratan analogue, he also shared a separate manuscript with the Adi Sakhian compiler. A Miharban source provided him with a small cluster near the end of his work and through the manuscript he has scattered six discourses of the heterodox variety.

The narrative structure imposed by its compiler is, for the most part, a rudimentary one. It retains its consistency for as long as he remains with his first source (the first eight sakhis), but little heed is paid thereafter to systematic order or chronology apart from the introduction of the death sakhi at the very end. The manuscript written in Gurmukhi script, has been edited by Piar Singh and published under the title Janam Sakhi Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji (Amritsar, 1974). An English translation by W.H. McLeod has also been issued as The B40 JanamSakhi (Amritsar, 1979).

References :

1. Piar Sirigh, Janam Sakhi Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Amritsar, 1974
2. Kirpal Singh, Janam Sakhi Prampara. Patiala, 1969
3. McLeod, W.H.. The B40 Janam-Sakhi. Amritsar, 1979

KABITT SAVAIYYE,

by Bhai Gurdas who had worked with Guru Arjan on the preparation of the original volume of Sikh scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, and who is remembered in the Sikh tradition as the first consistent interpreter of the Gurus' word, is a collection of 675 kabitts and savaaiyyas composed by the poet in Braj. Of his kabitts and savaaiyyas, a total of 556 only were known before 1940 when Bhai Vir Singh searched out and published another 119 of them, thereby bringing their total to 675.

However, nine kabitts, among the later 119, are almost identical with the other nine published earlier. Some scholars, thus, exclude these nine and take the total number of these kabitts and savaaiyyas to be 666. It is generally believed that some of the kabitts and savaaiyyas are still untraced. As regards the time and place of these compositions, opinion varies. It is generally believed that a major part of this work was completed after the poet's more popular work, the Vars, had been written.

The more likely venue was Kashi and Agra where the Bhai had lived for some time. The conjecture is strengthened by several factors. One, the theme of the poetry belongs to the poet's maturer years. Second, the language of these compositions is akin to the contemporary religious and literary genius of Kashi and Agra. A pang of separation from the Guru is the running theme of this poetry. Bhai Gurdas was able clearly to comprehend the meanings of the text and then explain it in the simplest vocabulary.

For the Punjabi readers, he has done this in his varsand for his readers in Kashi and Agra in the kabittsand savaaiyyas. To make his works widely comprehensible, Bhai Gurdas has used similes and metaphors from daily life. In the first section the poet has used kabiits and savaaiyyas in their simplest form. The thrust is in the fourth and final line in which his meaning is communicated very forcefully.

The poetry also symbolizes Bhai Gurdas`s deep love for his Gurus. Bhai Gurdas spent long spells in Agra and Kashi spreading the message of the Gurus, but he always longed for a glimpse of the Guru. Compositions dealing with poet`s pangs of separation are a fine specimen of his poetic art.

References :

1. Kaur Sirigh, Akali, Taikara Bhai Curdns p. de Kahitt Savaiyye. Amritsar, 1929
2. Jaggi, Rattan Sirigh, Bhai Gurdas: fivani Ie Rachna. Patiala, 1974
3. Darshan Singh, Bhm Cwdds. Patiala, 1986

KARNI NAMA,

address on the importance of good conduct, is an apocryphal composition in verse attributed to Guru Nanak. In this work Guru Nanak is said to have predicted to one Qazi Rukan Din the advent of the rule of the Khalsa which will usher in the millennium.

MIHARBAN JANAM SAKHI

takes its name from Sodhi Miharban, nephew of Guru Arjan and leader of the schismatic Mma sect. Miharban`s father, Prithi Chand, was the eldest son of Guru Ram Das and as such had greatly resented being passed over as his father`s successor in favour of a younger brother. He set himself as a rival to the Guru. He and his followers who supported his claims were stigmatized as Mmas or hypocrites and out castes.

Succeeding his father as leader of this sect in 1619, Miharban guided it until his death in 1640. Later, the sect declined into insignificance. A belief, however, survived that Miharban had composed a janam. sakhi of Guru Nanak. Until well into the twentieth century, no copy of this Janam Sakhi had come to light. The prologue to the highly respected Cyan Ratanavali specifically declared that the Mmas had corrupted the authentic record of Guru Nanak`s life and teachings.

The lost Miharban Janam Sakhihan accordingly been branded spurious and heretical, and but for the Cyan Ratanavali reference it would probably have been forgotten completely. In 1940, however, a Miharban manuscript was discovered at Damdama Sahib and subsequently acquired by Khalsa College, Amritsar. Upon examination this substantial manuscript turned out to contain only the first half of the complete Miharban Janam Sakhi. According to the colophon, the complete work comprised six volumes (pothis}. The manuscript itself consisted of the first three volumes, Pothi Sachkhand, Pothi Hariji, and Pothi Chaturbhuj, respectively.

The three missing sections were entitled Keso Rai Pothi, Abhai Pad Pothi, and Prem Pad Pothi. In 1961, the Khalsa College acquired a second and much smaller Miharban manuscript which provided a text for folios missing from the Damdama manuscript. It is, however, limited to a portion of Pothi Sachkhand, and thus provides no material from the three missing volumes.

The only portion to survive from this latter half of the Miharban Janam Sakhi is its account of the death of Guru Nanak. This has been incorporated in a recension of the Bald Janam Sakhi tradition. From the extant volumes of the Miharban janam Sakhi, three important conclusions may be drawn. The first of these is that the work can scarcely be described as heretical. Objections grounded in orthodox doctrine may certainly be raised at a few points, but the same can be said of

References

:

1. Kirpal Singh, ed., Janam Sakhi Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Amritsar, 1962
2. __, Janam Sakhi Parampara. Patiala, 1969
3. McLeod, W. H., Early Sikh Tradition. Oxford, 1980

NASIHAT NAMAH,

lit. epistle of admonishment, is an apocryphal composition in verse attributed to Guru Nanak and is said to have been addressed by the Guru to king Croesus (Karun in Sikh chronicles). The King is advised to do good deeds when God has bestowed riches upon him. Money spent in a good cause is money well spent. Money belongs to him who spends it.

Everything in this world is transient and none should feel proud of his possessions which are bound to perish. True God alone shall abide forever. Karun could be a very rich man so named after the historical Croesus, king of Lydia, 5605-46 BC, known for his fabulous wealth.

References :

1. Kohli, Surinder Singh, A Critical Study of Adi Granth. Delhi, 1961

POTHI,

popular Punjabi form of the Sanskrit pustaka (book), derived from the root pust (to bind) via the Pali potlhaka and Prakrit puttha. Besides Punjabi, the word pothi meaning a book is current in Maithili, Bhojpuri and Marathi languages as well. Among the Sikhs, however, pothi signifies a sacred book, especially one containing gurbani or scriptural texts and of a moderate size, generally larger than a gutka but smaller than the Adi Granth, although the word is used even for the latter in the index of the original recension prepared by Guru Arjan and preserved at Kartarpur, near Jalandhar.

In Puratan Janam Sakhi, the earliest known life story of Guru Nanak, the book of hymns which he gave to his successor. Guru Angad, is called pothi. Guru Arjan, Nanak V, probably alluding to the Adi Granth pronounces pothi to be "the abode of God" for it contains "complete knowledge of God" (GG, 1226). At several places in the Guru Granth Sahib, pothi refers to sacred books of the Hindus as distinguished from those of the Muslims for which the words used are kateb and Quran.

POTHI SACH KHAND,

by Sodhi Miharban (also written as Miharvan), is the first of the six pothis or volumes which are said to have comprised the first detailed janam sdkhi or biography of Guru Nanak. Sodhi Miharban (1581-1640) was the son of Baba Prithi Chand and grandson of Guru Ram Das, Nanak IV. Of the six pot his he is believed to have written only three are extant today. They are Pothi Sach Khand, Pothi Hariji and Chaturbhuj Pothi.

Pothi Sach Khand is available in manuscript form, both individually and bound together with the other two pothis. Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, has a manuscript copy of Pothi Sach Khand (accession No 83; undated) and another of all the three pothis bound together (accession No 954).The Sikh History Research Department of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, also has a manuscript copy (accession No 927) of the three pot his bound together. Another manuscript copy existed in the Sikh Reference Library, Amritsar, which got lost in the cataclysmic events of 1984.

The manuscript at the Khalsa College, Amritsar, is a copy made in 1885 Bk/AD 1828 from another manuscript bearing 1837 Bk/ AD 1780 as its date, whereas the one at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar (accession No 954) is a copy dated 1837 Bk/AD 1780. The first manuscript of these pot his came to light when Khalsa College, Amritsar, acquired it. The manuscript was then edited and published (1962) in two volumes under the title Janam Sakhi Sn Guru Nanak Dev Ji, with a lengthy introduction bringing

out its literary, historical, linguistic and exegetical significance.

The colophon at the end of the Khalsa College manuscript states that the six pothls together comprised 575 gostis. The Pothi Sack Khand, which originally had 167 gost is, has here a total of 153: the fact of the loss of gostis` was is noted by the copyist as well. Maybe, they had been lost by the time the manuscript reached him. The colophon does not give any date of composition of the first copy of Pothi Sach Khand, though this information is available about the other two volumes, Pothi Hariji and Chaturbhuj Pothi, which, according to the copyist were completed in 1707 Bk/AD 1650 and Bk 1708/AD 1651, respectively.

Evidently, Pothi Sach Khand which comprises as much matter as the other two put together, might have taken two to three years to complete. According to Hariji, Cost Sri Satguru Miharbdn ji ki, the gost is pertaining to all the Gurus and Bhaktas, were composed during the lifetime of Miharban. The copyist seems to suggest that the basic or original copy of these pothiswas prepared at Muhammadipur at the behest of Hariji and Chaturbhuj and that the whole corpus comprised discourses given by Miharban and put to pen by one Keshodas Brahman (vachanisriguru miharvdn de likhdt ji likhi bhai kesodds brdhmanu sevaku guru da... guldin chatur bhoj kd... guru de hukam ndii potht sodht).

References :

1. Piar Singh, ed., Adi Sakhian. Ludhiana, 1983
2. -"A Critical Survey of Seventeenth Century Punjabi Prose" (unpublished thesis). Chandigarh, 1968

3. McLeod, W.H., Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion.
Oxford, 1968

POTHIAN, BABA MOHAN VALIAN,

manuscript copies {pothian, lit. books), in Gurmukhi script, containing some of the compositions of the first three Gurus and eight medieval saints, which, according to Sikh tradition. Guru Arjan (1563-1606) obtained from Baba Mohan, the elder son of the Third Guru, Amar Das, and which he utilized in the compilation of the Adi Granth.

They are also known as Goindval valian pothian for the reason that they were transcribed in Goindval, the seat of the Third Guru, and remained there until the earlier half of the 20th century, except for a brief period of time when they were in the custody of Guru Arjan in Amritsar. Still another tie is Sahansar Ram valian Pothian, recalling the name of the writer, Sahansar Ram, son of Mohan and grandson of Guru Amar Das. Two of the pot his are still extant, both in the possession of the descendants of Guru Amar Das.

One of them is preserved at Patiala and is the property of Bava Bhagat Singh Bhalla (since shifted to Pinjaur, near Chandigarh), who first took it from Goindval to Mardan in 1940 and brought it to Patiala to which town he migrated after the partition of the Punjab (1947). This pothi is on view for darshan in his house on the morning of the full moon day each month. People gather to offer obeisance and after hymn singing, hukam, i.e. a sabda, is read out from the pothi by one of the family members as the Guru`s command (hukam) or lesson for the day.

Use of the pot his for scrutiny or scholarly study is not permissible. Of the other Goindval pothi, now at the

village of Darapur near Urmur in Hoshiarpur district of the Punjab, a photocopy was obtained by the Punjabi University and is preserved in its Library. This pothi in the order of writing in fact precedes the Patiala manuscript. Preceding both in point of time is the pothi mentioned in the Puratan Janam Sakhi as having been bequeathed by Guru Nanak to his successor. Guru Angad, which is sometimes, though with insufficient authority, identified as Guru Harsahai vali Pothi, now believed to be lost for good. The Baba Mohan pot his were in preparation for two years.

The work, commenced in September 1570, was completed on 10 Bhadori 1629 Bk/9 August 1572, but additions perhaps continued to be made even later. The size of both the pot his is the same, i.e. 13" x 9.5". This is inclusive of the 2inch margin which runs all around the page and is marked by five lines, two very thin on either side and one somewhat thicker in the middle. Each page, with but rare exceptions, has 13 lines. The first page of the first pot his and the first two pages of the second have illuminations in highly decorative designs. The two manuscripts make up 300 + 224 folios, or 1,048 pages.

At various places in both, pages are left blank, presumably to provide room for any hymn or hymns that might subsequently be located. The script used is Gurmukhi of an initial stage. The formation of some of its letters show their kinship with Sarda and Takari. For instance, letters /h/, /!/, /a/, /th/, /n/ have close resemblance with their counterparts in those scripts. Folios 167 and 227 of the first pot his are written in a different hand in an unfamiliar landd script which has no vowel signs nor any diacritical sign for the nasal sound /ri/. A note recorded in the margin of folio 216 of the

second pothi alludes to the origin of Gurmukhi characters in these words: Guru Angad gurmukhi akhar bandi babe de age sabad bhet kltid (Guru Angad coined Gurmukhi letters and presented to the Baba).

The text facing this note is Guru Nanak's hymn beginning with puran paramjoti paramesar pritam pran hamare, in Rag Sarang. The sabdas included in these manuscripts fall within fourteen different ragas. Compositions in the first pot his (Darapurvali also called Ahiyapurvali, correctly spelt Yahyapurvali) occur under ragas Suhi, Prabhati, Dhanasari, Basant, Tilang, Gujari, Bhairo, Maru, Kedara, Vadhans, Bilaval, Malar and Asa, and those in the second under Ramkali, Sorathi, Sarang and Malar. The order of ragas and of the sabdas and padds, however, does not correspond with that adopted in the Adi Granth. There are variations in the text also; sometimes whole lines and padds differ.

Guru Nanak's hymn, kaun taraji kavanu tula, which occurs in measure Suhi in the Guru Granth Sahib appears in the Darapur pothis in Parbhati Lalat. In the text, kaun is written as kavan, tula as tola and mere Isl jio tera ant na jana as tera baba antu na jana. At places, in the pothis, two different versions of the same hymn appear side by side. Certain hymns are jointly credited to Kabir and Namdev. For example, basant bani Kabir Name Hand bhairau Kabir Namdev bhagat.

Two hymns show both Kabir and Namdev to be the disciples of Guru Nanak. Their headings run: bhairau Kabir Nama bhagat babe ji ke, and Kedra Kabir Nama babe patsah de bhagat (folios 263 and 292, respectively, of vol.1) The pothis begin with the invocaton: Ik oankar satiguru parsad sachu nam kartaru nirbhau nirinkaru akal

murti ajuni sanbho. This is different from the form in which Guru Arjan recorded the prelude to the Japu in the Guru Granth Sahib: Ikonkar satinamu karata purakhu nirbhau nirvairu akal murati ajuni saibhan gurparsadi.

References :

1. Bhalla, Sarup Das, Mahimd Prakdsh. Patiala, 1971
2. Santokh Singh, Bhai, Sri Cur Pratdp Suraj Granth. Amritsar, 1927-35
3. Chhibbar, Kesar Singh, BansdvalIndmd Dasdn Pdtshdhtdn Kd. (ed. Rattan Singh Jaggi). Chandigarh, 1972
4. Punjabi Duniya. Patiala, June 1958

PREM AMBODH POTHİ,

lit. book of knowledge about loving devotion, attributed to Guru Gobind Singh, but not included in the Dasam Granth, comprises of the life stories in verse of some of the famous bhaktas or devotees. Written in AD 1693, the book has, besides the introductory chapter, sixteen sections, each devoted to a bhakta. In the first part of the book are described the lives of eleven bhaktas belonging to the period from 10th to 16th centuries: Kabir, Dhanna, Trilochan, Namdev, Jaidev, Ravidas, Miran Bai, Karaman Bai, Pipa, Sain and Sadhna.

Bhaktas of earlier periods Prahlad, Dhru, Sukdev and Balmiki are dealt with in the second part. The language of the Pothi is a mixture of Hindi and Punjabi and the verse measures commonly used are Dohira and Chaupai. The book is unpublished and among the known extant manuscripts with slight variation in titles are in the Central Public Library at Patiala, and the Languages Department, Punjab, Patiala.

PREM SUMARAG,

lit. the true way to love (ਪ੍ਰੇਮ=love; ਸੁ=good or true; ਮਾਰਗ =path) is an anonymous work in old Punjabi evoking a model of Sikh way of life and of Sikh society. Written probably in the eighteenth century, it is a kind of rahitnamd attempting to prescribe norms of behaviour, religious as well as social, private as well as public, for members of the Khalsa Panth. It also provides a comprehensive model of Sikh polity with details concerning civil and military administration.

Although known to earlier Sikh scholars, it was published for the first time in 1953 by the Sikh History Society, Amritsar, edited with an elaborate introduction by Bhai Randhir Singh, who accidentally in 1940 came by a partly mutilated manuscript, which he revised with the help of another manuscript preserved in the Punjab Public Library, Lahore. A second edition was brought out by New Book Company, Jalandhar, in 1965. The work is divided into ten dhidos (chapters) and each dhido is subdivided into several bachans (utterances or topics). Chapter I opens with what may be called a prologue.

It is in the form of an artistic device recalling the beginning of Guru Gobind Singh's Bachitra Natak where God addresses the Guru on the purpose for which he was being sent into the world of the mortals. That was to expunge evil and promote virtue. Following this mode, the author of Prem Sumarag invests the code of conduct he is enunciating with divine sanction and intimates how important it was for the Sikhs to abide by it to realize the object for which the Khalsa was created by Guru Gobind

Singh. The daily routine prescribed for a Sikh consists in getting up early in the morning, taking a bath, reciting Japu and Jap five times in the morning, Japu and Jap at noon, Sodar, Japu, and Jap in the evening and ` readings from the Bachitra Natak and Kirtan Sohila before going to bed.

The stress is on constant remembrance of God, on honest work, mutual help and love. A Sikh must shun flirtation and adultery, greed, anger, theft, egocentricity, speaking ill of others, falsehood and even truth that harms others. He must always keep the arms by his side, work for his living, be hospitable, address fellow Sikhs as `Singh Ji,` and resign himself, in all situations, to the Will of the Almighty.

The book also lays down the method of Khalsa initiation and principles of social behaviour (3); rituals to be observed at childbirth (4); rules regarding the selection of life partners, the age for marriage, permitting a widow to remarry (5); the kind of food a Sikh should partake of and the kind, especially intoxicants, that he must avoid, laying special emphasis on cleanliness (6); the dress and ornaments a Sikh should wear, the occupations he should pursue and those he must forbear from (7). Truth telling is prized most. He who perjures his oath shall "into the dark pit of hell be cast." He who renders false witness sins.

Even kings cannot claim exemption from these moral norms. Chapter VII describes death rites. The seventh bachan of this chapter says: "Do not cry; do not lament, do not abjure sleeping on beds; accept (His) hukam as true and be resigned. Do not attend the funeral of a masand or of the followers of masands, do not mix with them or with those Sikhs who observe tonsure. Feel

not so restrained in respect of others, be they Hindu or Musalman...." Chapter VIII contains the author's views regarding Sikh polity.

According to him, the ideal form of Sikh state is monarchy. Power was to be vested not in the Panth as a whole, but in a single ruler assisted by a sagacious minister. There were to be other pious and learned advisory councillors. The King, however, enjoyed absolute authority, without any check or restraint except for the voice of his own conscience. The foremost duty of the ruler was in fact to safeguard his own authority and to be always prepared to smother any challenge to it.

The whole scheme of administration was drawn up on the model of medieval feudalism with its mansaaddri and jagirdari systems. The king, however, was personally to supervise the administration of justice. He must be accessible to all his subjects, and his decisions must be impartial and independent of any considerations of belief or religion. At the same time, he was to remember that he owed special responsibility to the Khalsa Panth.

Gurmukhi (Punjabi) was to be the official language of the State and all Sikh children were to be given instruction in the Khalsa rahit or code of conduct. For the author the ideal Sikh State is an absolute, but benevolent, monarchy which points to the possibility of the work having been written after Maharaja Ranjit Singh had occupied Lahore in 1799. The oldest MS. of Prem Sumdrag so far discovered is dated 1801. Chapter IX deals with miscellaneous matters such as rules of inheritance and distribution of property, debts and interest rate, slaves, animals, gardens and agricultural land.

The last chapter may be regarded as an epilogue. It propounds the realization of sahad jog (state of equipoise and contentment) as the ideal of human life. The path of sahad is the most easy and at the same time the most difficult one. The seeker of sahad must equip. himself with daya (compassion), seva (service), bhao (love) and bhagati (fervent devotion to God). In sum, complete submission to God`s Will and indifference to both pain and pleasure was the essence of the "way of love."

References :

1. Grewal, J.S., "Prem Sumarg: a Theory of Sikh Social Order," in Proceedings Punjab History Conference. Patiala, 1965
2. Mohan Singh, Introduction to Punjabi Literature. Amritsar, 1951
3. Teja Singh, The Religion of the Sikh Gurus. Amritsar, 1957
4. Nripinder Singh, The Sikh Moral Tradition. Delhi, 1990

PURATAN JANAM SAKHI

is considered to be the oldest extant Janam Sakhi. The term 'Puratan,' is used to designate an early Janam Sakhi tradition, rediscovered in 1872 after more than a century of oblivion. By the mid eighteenth century the Bald Janam Sakhi tradition had won general acceptance as the authentic record of the life of Guru Nanak largely displacing other important collections. In the popular estimation it still retains this reputation, but, as the nineteenth century wore on, educated opinion became increasingly dissatisfied with its apparent exaggerations.

The discovery of a different and apparently more rational tradition was accordingly greeted with considerable interest and delight. The newly discovered tradition was called by Max Arthur Macauliffe "the most ancient biography of Baba Nanak" and has ever since provided the Bala tradition with its strongest competitor. Although the Bala narrative retains a greater popular appeal, the Puratan version has won an overwhelming victory amongst educated readers. Since its rediscovery, no sophisticated biographer of Guru Nanak has overlooked its claims and most have accepted it as a sufficient basis for reconstructing the story of his life.

Two important Puratan manuscripts came to light within the space of twelve years. The first of these had been acquired with other works from the H.T. Colebrooke collection which had been presented to the library of East India House, probably in 1815 or 1816. It lay unrecognized in London until 1872 when it was loaned, as one of several manuscripts in Gurmukhi, to Ernest

Trumpp, the German missionary commissioned by the Punjab Government to prepare an English translation of the Sikh scriptures. Although Janam Sakhis were not a part of Trumpp's commission, he gave his new discovery considerable prominence in the preface to his The Adi Granth.

Trumpp's description of the manuscript provoked much interest in the Punjab and, in 1883, a group of Sikhs from Amritsar petitioned the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, Charles Aitchison, to have it brought to India for inspection. Aitchison agreed and, having perceived the measure of interest aroused by the manuscript, he arranged to have it photographically reproduced. A limited edition, known as the photo zincograph facsimile, was issued in 1885. Meanwhile, the Lahore Singh Sabha had in 1884 produced a lithographed version of the text. To distinguish it from other janam sakhis of the Puratan tradition, this manuscript is now known either as the Colebrooke Janam Sakhi or as the Valdiivdh Janam Sakhi. It bears no date. A cryptic reference in one of the sakhis may be interpreted as a reference to 1635, but the evidence it offers is altogether too tenuous to support even a tentative conclusion. Various periods have been suggested by various scholars. Some of them suggested that it was written in the first half of the eighteenth century. A recent publication gives 1588 as the year of its completion. Its language and grammatical constructions show that this Janam Sakhi must have been written around the time of the compilation of the Adi Granth Sahib.

Now that we have a manuscript of Bald Janam Sakhi bearing the date 1658, it could safely be accepted that Puratan Janam Sakhi is a writing of the sixteenth century,

because its language is much older than that of Bald. While the examining of the Colebrooke manuscript was in progress, a second Puratan manuscript was discovered in the town of Hafizabad by Gumukh Singh of Oriental College, Lahore. Gurmukh Singh loaned his find to Macauliffe who, having divided its unbroken lines into separate words, published the text privately in 1885.

The version is variously known as the Hafizdbad Janam Sakhi or as the Macauliffe vali Janam Sakhi. These two manuscripts, the Colebrooke and the Hdfizdbdd, remain amongst the most important of the Puratan tradition. The only other extant manuscript which warrants inclusion in this select group is the one preserved at the Languages Department, Patiala (No 194). Although each differs significantly from the others, the areas of agreement are much more extensive than the variants and all three clearly belong to a common tradition. Behind all the Janam Sakhis of the Puratan tradition, there can be detected an early cluster of sakhis from which all are variously descended.

This cluster underwent separate development (presumably in different geographical areas), producing two distinct versions of the tradition. LDP (Languages Department, Punjab) 194 represents an intermediate stage in one line of development; and the Colebrooke manuscript stands at the climax of the other. The Hafizabad manuscript, latest of the three in terms of development, draws the two lines together in a generally consistent reunion. The primitive cluster from which all Puratan Janam Sakhis are descended was probably the earliest of all coherent collections of individual sakhis. No evidence exists to suggest that this comparatively small selection was ever recorded.

Apparently, it assumed a rudimentary chronology while still circulating orally. Emphasis at this stage was laid on stories of Guru Nanak's childhood and early manhood, with comparatively little attention devoted to the period of his travels. During the period of separate development, however, the tradition expanded vigorously, particularly within the subsidiary tradition which eventually produced the Colebrooke Janam Sakhi. Most of the additional anecdotes incorporated during this stage concerned the travels of Guru Nanak and it was evidently the Colebrooke subsidiary which ordered these into the distinctive Puratan itinerary. This involves four separate journeys to the east, south, north, and west, respectively.

The other subsidiary tradition seems to have been much less prolific. It does, however, possess a particular importance in that traditions which borrow extensively from early Puratan sources all seem to have utilized this second subsidiary. Obvious links in the *Adi Sakhidn*, the *B40 Janam Sakhi*, and the *Miharban* tradition must evidently be explained in these terms. The reunion of the two subsidiaries took place when the *Hafizabad* compiler, using a manuscript of the Colebrooke subsidiary as his principal source, added to it anecdotes and discourses drawn from the other subsidiary tradition.

Puratan manuscripts are much rarer than those of the *Bala* tradition, a feature easily explained by the length by period of Puratan eclipse. *Shamsher Singh Ashok* in his *Punjabi Hatth Likhatan di Suchi*, Parts I and II, lists only three in the Punjab (one of them incomplete). Although at least three others are known to exist within the state and others may yet be found, it seems most unlikely that the total will ever exceed ten including the famous Colebrooke

manuscript in London, The Hafizabad manuscript is no longer extant. It was apparently destroyed during an ownership dispute which developed in 1923.

The published versions have already been noted. These are the lithographed and photocopy editions of the Colebrooke manuscript (1884-1885) and Macauliffe's lithograph edition of the Hafizabad manuscript (1885). Perhaps the most influential of all has been a conflation of the two manuscripts prepared by Bhai Vir Singh and published under the title *Puratan Janam Sakhi* (Amritsar, 1926). In the second edition (1931), Bhai Vir Singh added material drawn from a manuscript held by Khalsa College, Amritsar. The text of an expanded *Puratan* manuscript in the possession of Seva Singh Sevak has been published by its owner under the title *Prachin Janam Sakhi* (Jalandhar, 1969).

A work compiled by Shamsheer Singh Ashok, *Puratan Janam Sakhi Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Ki* (Amritsar, 1969), uses a *Puratan* manuscript as its foundation, but interpolates much material drawn from two non *Puratan* manuscripts. The language of this *Janam Sakhi* invites special attention. It is Lahndi or Western Punjabi. Its grammatical pattern is akin to the language of the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Many of the case inflexions which are frequently used in *Guru Granth Sahib*, but have disappeared in the modern language, are present in the language of this *Janam Sakhi*.

Suffix `u` which is the marker of masculine, singular, nominative case or accusative case, and suffix `i`, a marker of case of agent of locative case, are two important suffixes commonly employed in the Sikh scripture as well as in *Puratan Janam Sakhi*, but are no

longer in use in modern Punjabi. The use of suffix `i` or `ai` in adverbial forms and suffix `i` with the first element of the compound verbs are other characteristics of the old language freely employed in Puratan Janam Sakhi. Yet another conspicuous characteristic of the language of the Puratan Janam Sakhi is the much lower frequency of nasalization as compared to modern Punjabi. In this case too Puratan Janam Sakhi is in line with the Guru Granth Sahib.

References :

1. Vir Singh, Bhai, ed., Puratan Janam Sakhi. Amritsar, 1926
2. Sevak, Seva Singh, Prdchin Janam Sakhi. Jalandhar, 1969
3. Macauliffe, M.A., ed., Janam Sakhi Babe Nanakji of. Rawalpindi, 1885
4. McLeod, W.H., Early Sikh Tradition. Oxford, 1980 W.H.M.

Panj Sau Sakhi,

a collection of five hundred anecdotes (panj=five; sau=hundred; sakhi = anecdote), attributed to Bhai Ram Kuir (1672-1761), a descendant of Bhai Buddha, renamed Bhai Gurbakhsh Singh as he received the rites of the Khalsa at the hands of Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708). It is said that during his long association with the Guru, Ram Kuir had heard from his lips many anecdotes concerning the lives of the Gurus which he used to narrate to Sikhs after his return to his village, Ramdas, in Amritsar district, after Anandpur had been evacuated in 1705. Bhai Sahib Singh is said to have reduced these sakhis to writing.

Later, they were split into five parts, each comprising one hundred stories whence the title "Sau Sakhi" or A Hundred Stories gained currency. These five sections were distributed among Bhai Sahib Singh, the scribe, Kabull Mall, Multani Sura, Ratia, and Surat Singh of Agra. Giani Gian Singh, author of the Panth Prakash, is said to have seen two manuscripts of this work – one with a mahant (priest) of Name da Kot and another with Shiv Ram Khatri of Agra.

Bhai Kahn Singh of Nabha also seems to have had access to a manuscript copy. None of these manuscripts, much less an authentic printed version, is however available today. The authors of the Gurbilas and Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth seem to have drawn upon these anecdotes which are more legendary than historical in character.

References :

1. Bedi, Tarlochan Singh, Punjabi Varkak da Alochanatmak Adhyyan, Delhi, 1972.
2. Gurmukh Singh, Sevapanthian di Punjabi Sahit nun Den. Patiala, 1986.
3. Kohli, S.S. (ed.), Puratan Punjabi Vartak Chandigarh, 1973.

SUKHMAM SAHANSARNAMA (PARAMARAIH),

by Sodhi Hariji, is a commentary in prose on Sukhmani Sahansarnama, a poetic composition by his father, Sodhi Miharban, containing 30 astpadis or 8 stanza compositions in the style of Guru Arjan`s Sukhmani. The term `Paramarath` in the title denotes explanation or exposition to distinguish this work from the original text by Sodhi Miharban. Beginning with an invocation to Sri ThakurJi (Lord Krsna), the original work subscribes to the Vaisnavite theory of incarnation against the monotheistic nirguna doctrine of the Gurus.

Hariji in his commentary expands the mythological account of the various incarnations of God, with elaborate details of the exploits of Lord Rama and Lord Krsna mentioned in the 23rd and 25th astpadis respectively of the original composition. The work is also sometimes referred to as Chaiibis Avutaran di Pothi or the Book of Twenty-four Incarnations. According to internal evidence, the work was commenced in 1646 and completed probably in two years.

Its language is old Hindi or Hindavi which was in vogue among professional preachers and priests of those days. However, biographical passages, wherever they occur, are in chaste Punjabi and provide typical specimens of contemporary Punjabi prose, with a poetic flourish. The work has not yet been published. Three manuscript copies are preserved in the Central Public Library at Patiala, under catalogue numbers 692, 1904 and 2914.

VARAN BHAI GURDAS

is the title given to the collection of forty vars or "ballads" written in Punjabi by Bhai Gurdas (d. 1636) much honoured in Sikh piety and learning. These forty vars comprise 913 pauris or stanzas, with a total of 6,444 lines. There is no internal or external evidence available to determine the exact time of the composition of these vars, but it can be assumed that vars (Nos. 3,11,13,24,26,38,39) which have references to Guru Hargobind who came into spiritual inheritance in 1606 after the death of Guru Arjan, his predecessor, might have been composed sometime after that year, and the others implicitly prior to that date.

The Var36 on the Minas was probably written before the compilation of the Sikh Scripture in 1603-04. The var, in Punjabi folk tradition dealt with the themes of martial valour and chivalry, but this poetic form underwent a complete transformation in the hands of Guru Nanak (1469-1539), whose vars had a spiritual meaning, with the battleground shifting to the human psyche. They depicted the fight between the forces of good and evil symbolized in the persons of gurmukh and manmukh, respectively. The vars of Bhai Gurdas are also spiritual rather than heroic in theme.

They were written for separate audiences and that is why they lack a consistently pervasive thematic burden amongst or within them. However, comprehensive study of them all can help us build a fairly authentic biography of Guru Nanak and the milieu he inherited and he and five of his successors lived in. They provide us with information

about the prominent Sikhs of those days and, more important than anything else, they enunciate almost every Sikh concept as it appears in the Guru Granth Sahib and constitute the core of Sikh moral code.

On the whole, these vars form a critique and interpret moral principles in a simple idiom through familiar images and homely instance and give us an insight into the meaning and teaching of the Sikh faith in its earlier years. The first var, which is the longest with forty-nine stanzas, is a work of historical importance. It begins with an invocatory canto, followed by a description of the creation of the world, six systems of Indian philosophy and the four yugas or time cycles. The following six stanzas (1722) refer to the serious crisis in the moral state of man, and the world is shown as debased owing to the accretion of pupa (evil, sin).

For Bhai Gurdas the elements contributing to, and to some extent consequent upon, this papa are the intolerance practised by men of various faiths and their indifference to and disregard of the Divine (17). Elsewhere also Bhai Gurdas refers to the conflict between the Hindu and the Muslim, each vying with the other for superiority, basing his claim on the profundity of their respective scriptures rather than on rightful practices. While making this criticism, Bhai Gurdas was envisioning the role of Sikhs as the needle that sews together the fabric of religious life torn asunder by Hindu and Muslim scissors (33.4).

Pauris 2344 mention the main events in the life of Guru Nanak. The following four stanzas (4548) eulogize the successors of Guru Nanak till Guru Hargobind. In the last stanza (49) the term vahiguru has been explained in

the Puranic context. This Var has also been paraphrased, in considerable detail, by Bhai Mani Singh and is known as Gian Ralnavali. The tenth var (23 stanzas) comprises the life sketches of 23 Hindu bhaktas, and the eleventh (31 stanzas) contains the list of prominent Sikhs of the first six Gurus.

The 28th Var addresses in the main the question as to what constitutes the true Sikh way of life, and the 36th is about the Minas. Bhai Gurdas has taken up for detailed analysis in these vars Sikh concepts of God, Guru, gurmukh, manmukh, sangat, seva, gurmantra, and others. God is omnipotent and all pervasive. He is not only the creator of this universe, but He also permeates through His creation. The ultimate aim of human life is to realize God which can be done only through the help of the Guru.

Bhai Gurdas proclaims that all the Gurus were one in spirit though different in body. God dwells in man`s own heart and to realize Him man need not wander in forests or mountains. The life of the householder was to be preferred to that of the ascetic. Since Bhai Gurdas is more concerned with life in this world, there is little in his vars of the rapturous bliss of the beyond; instead he recalls the disciple to the need of assiduously cultivating an abiding sense of moral obligation and duties. Such an understanding of the world was afforded Sikhs by Guru Nanak, who had, in epigrammatic manner, declaimed on the absolute reality of moral categories.

Bhai Gurdas posits sidh or constancy in spiritual faith and sabar or contentment while still engaged in worldly activity as the supreme virtues required of true Sikh (22.16). The term used for a true Sikh is gurmukh,

his opposite being manmukh; sidh and sabar are nourished in sadh sangat or company of the holy, not through ecstatic or mystic experience but through living together in a spirit of faith, humility and service. Bhai Gurdas is of the view that human existence is fortunately acquired and is a chance to find liberation.

He describes the path Of a Sikh as thin as a hair, as sharp as a dagger`s edge (9.2). It is a difficult, yet a straight path. The whole of var 28 is devoted to this theme. Steadfastness and fidelity are the other virtues Bhai Gurdas recommends for a Sikh who is enjoined upon to have one wife and respect other females as sisters and daughters (6.8). He is not to covet another`s wealth. Gotten wealth should be like pork to the Muslim and beef to the Hindu (29.11). He stands firm in his belief and is of undivided mind, with no dubiety which is considered a moral lapse for which responsibility lies solely on the individual.

He holds that in satyuga a moral lapse invoked the accountability of every being, in tretayuga of every person in the village, in dvaparyuga of all kinsfolk, and in kaliyuga of the single person who is the agent of the immoral act (12.16). These vars, which are accepted as part of approved Sikh canon, reiterate or explain in simple idiom what was contained in the Sikh Scripture. In fact, the vars were designated by Guru Arjan as the key to the Guru Granth Sahib.

However, the technique of Bhai Gurdas is not to take words from the sacred text and expound their meanings, but to pick up ideas and concepts and interpret them in simple and easily intelligible language. This technique of annotation was followed later on by Bhai Mani Singh and

then flowered into what we today call the Giani School of hermeneutics.

References :

1. Hans, S.S., "Bhai Gurdas" in Proceedings of Panjab History Conference (Twelfth Session). Patiala, 1969
2. Jodh Singh, tr., Varan Bhai Gurdas. Patiala, 1998
3. Jaggi, Ratan Singh, Bhai Gurdas, Jivani te Rachna. Patiala, 1974
4. Varan Bhai Gurdas, Shabad Anukramanika ate Kosh. Patiala, 1966
5. Jagat Singh, Varan Bhai Gurdas Ji. Amritsar.